Europe

Modern France

and

The McAll Mission

Mission Populaire Évangélique de France

Bureau 36 Rue Godot de Mauroi

Second Street East from the Madeleine

By

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ILLUSTRATED

"The present hour is decisive for the evangelization of our country. We are in the enjoyment of the most complete liberty; we shall be culpable if we fail to take advantage of it."

O. BEIGBEDER, Director of the Mission

"There is nothing to prevent France becoming Christian."

RUBENS SAILLENS

American McAll Association

1710 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia

1909

The Annual Fête at the Solidarité in Nantes

MODERN FRANCE

AND

THE McALL MISSION

Origin

The McAll Mission was born during the birth-throes of the new France—exactly on August 18, 1871, less than a year after Sedan and but three months after the Commune.

A Communist's remark was responsible for the Mission's beginning:

> "We are done," said this man, "we workingmen of Paris, with an imposed religion; we are ready to hear a gospel of freedom and earnestness."

The remark was addressed to Robert W. McAll, an English Nonconformist clergyman, who was passing his summer holidays in Paris and while he was engaged in distributing tracts in the district of Belleville. Five months later the minister was settled in Belleville, preaching the Gospel asked for.

A Double Prophecy

The history of the Third Republic and of the Mission have proved the obscure workingman to have been a prophet. The end of official religion came thirty years later with the closing of the religious orders and disestablishment; the People's Mission founded by Dr. McAll* has been welcomed throughout France.

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*For many years Dr. McAll wore the red ribbon of the Legion of Honor, bestowed upon him by the President of the Republic "for his services to humanity." He died on Ascension Day, May 11, 1893.

An Experiment of Faith and its Justification

The Mission's first station was a modest little shop transformed into a meeting hall with seats for forty persons. The simple announcement over the door read:

To Workingmen
Some English friends would like
to tell you of the love of
Jesus Christ.
Admission Free.

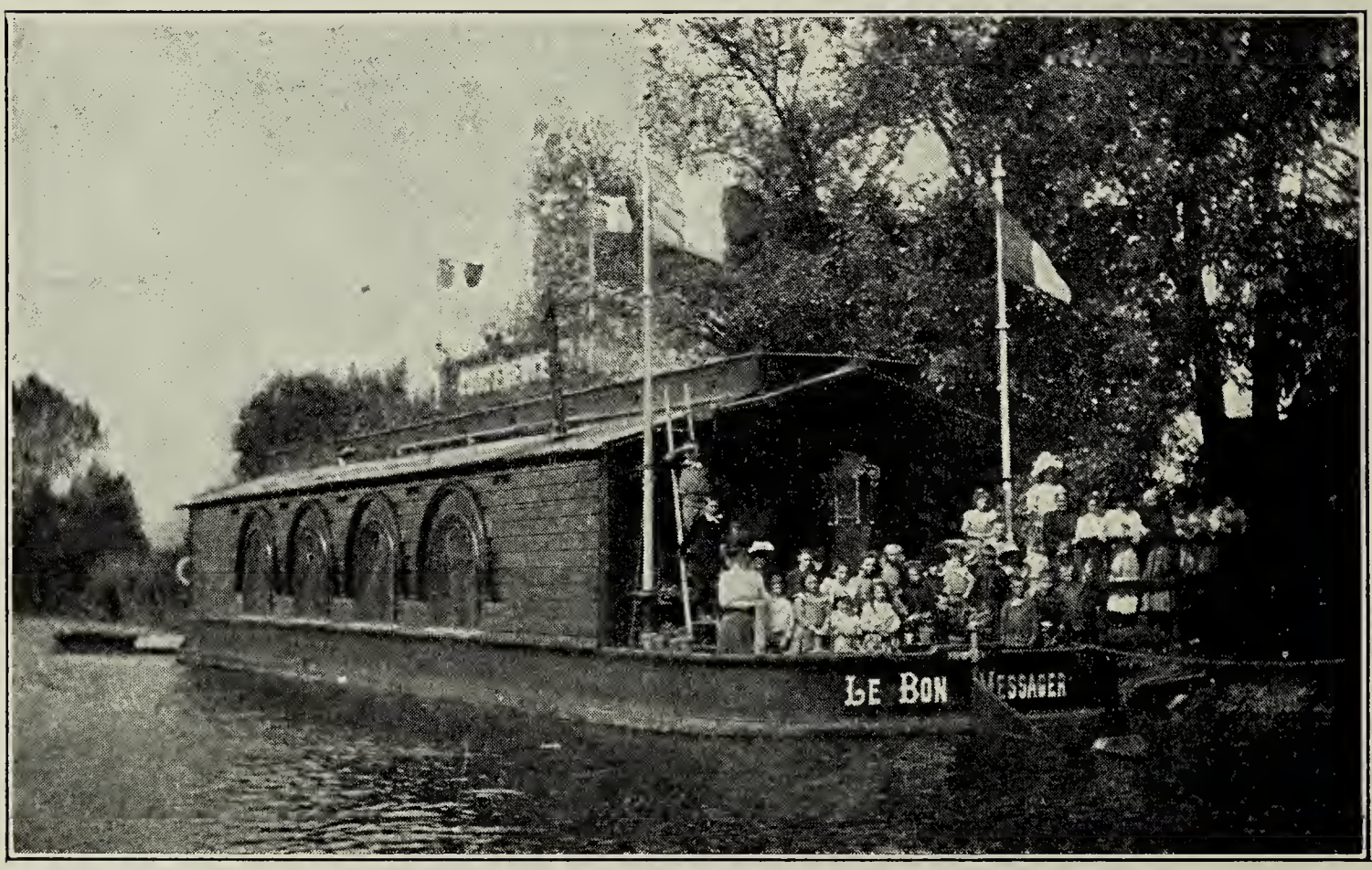
The Report for 1909 records:

Seventeen stations in Paris and suburbs; twenty-seven stations in the provinces; two chapel boats on the rivers and canals; one portable hall; one automobile engaged in itinerant evangelization.

In all over 10,000 meetings were held during the year.

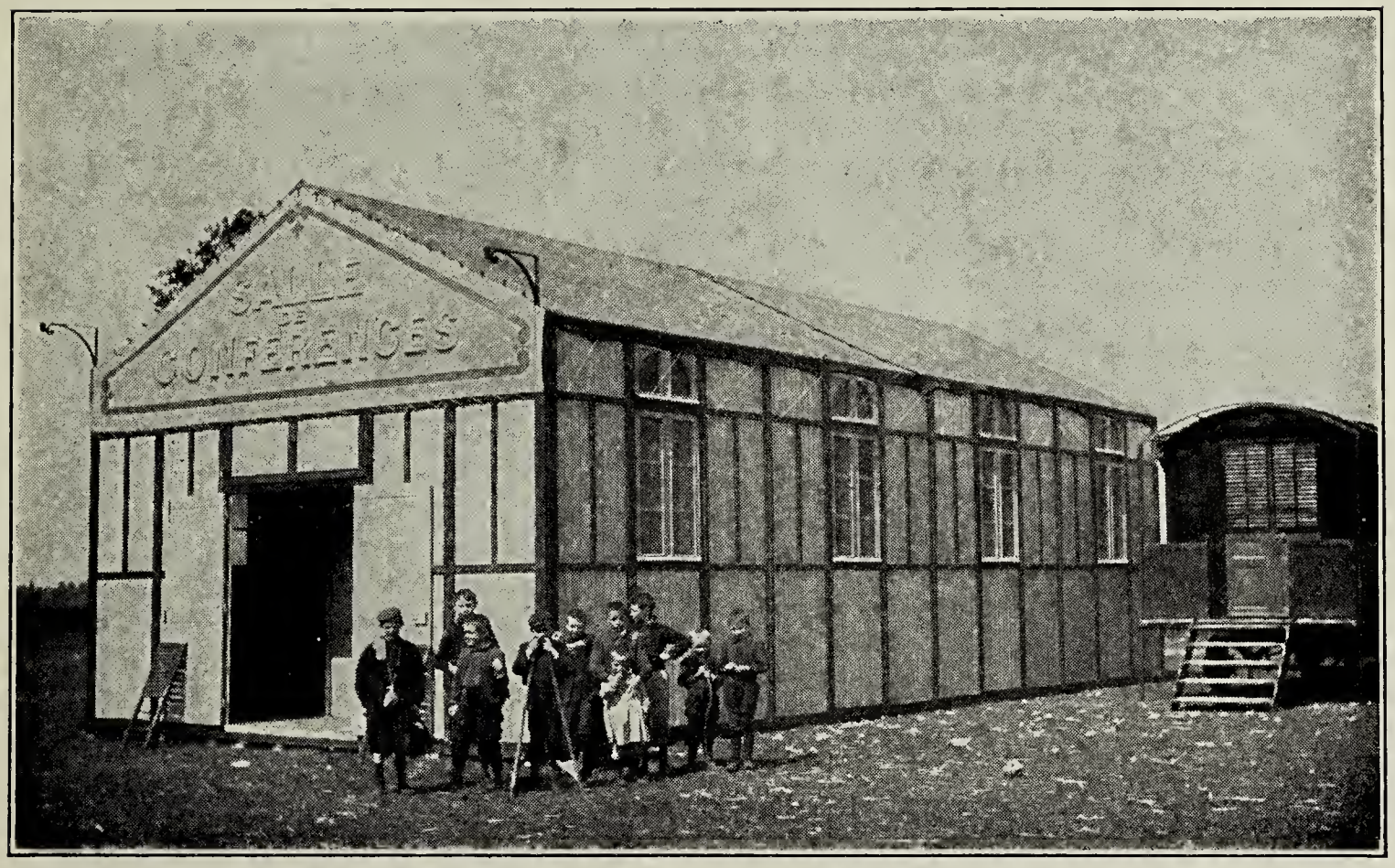
Le Bon Messager (Launched 1892)
La Bonne Nouvelle (Launched 1902)

The cruises of the two floating chapels, the *Good Messenger* and the *Good News,* along the silent highways of the Seine and Loire valleys have extended the influence of the Mission beyond the cities and towns to the peasantry.



The Bon Messager on the Oise

The story of the ministry of these strange little craft has been a continuous romance. Each boat has a seating capacity of but a hundred and sixty. Yet in the two hundred and fifty missions held on board, they have together preached the Gospel to an audience aggregating three-quarters of a million. A special brochure on this picturesque feature of the Mission may be had from the Bureau in Philadelphia.



La Semeuse—The Portable Hall

The Portable Hall

During the past summer a portable chapel *(maison démontable)* bearing the significant name, *La Semeuse* (the sower), was dedicated to the work of proclaiming the Gospel along the highways as the boats have done with such phenomenal success along the waterways. If the reception accorded this new "instrument of evangelization" during the three weeks of its first "mission" may be considered prophetic, the story of the boats will be repeated and continued. *La Semeuse* accommodates comfortably a hundred and fifty people. Two hundred were present on the evening of the inaugural service and a Sunday school of ninety-five was gathered together before the end of the "mission."

French Temperament and Evangelization

The Directors of a number of the McAll stations, as, for example, Lille, Desvres, Rouen, Limoges, St. Etienne and Marseilles, make recent mention of the increasing "stability" of the work, of the steadfastness of its converts and of their desire for a deeper spiritual life. A permanent influence on individual and community life is the Mission's ultimate aim. But France, and especially at the present moment, offers a peculiar field for specific "evangelical" effort.

The unchurched masses, weary of "ecclesiasticism," are yet open-minded and receptive—ready to "think it over." This the boats have proved in countless instances, particularly in connection with their enormous sales of Bibles and Testaments. The portable hall at the very outset tells the same story. M. Sainton, likewise, in his auto, making the rounds of the country fairs and market places, meets everywhere with the same experience—willingness to look into the evangelist's claims, to buy a Testament and take it home for examination. M. Beigbeder's statement (see cover), "The present hour is decisive," etc., is most significant in view of this open-mindedness of the people. The Mission's present call to "do the work of an evangelist" is imperative and the field co-extensive with France.

The Problem of the Cities

To reach the workingmen of the larger cities, however, more elaborate methods are necessary today. The mentality of these men has greatly changed in a generation. Along with the recent extension of education—of the power to think—has come doubt, skepticism and even atheism. Add to this the debauch of pernicious literature and the fearful ravages of alcoholism, and the difficulty of attracting to the Gospel those whose religious sense has been thus dulled is evident.

The Word Made Flesh

It is the determination to get men of this temper within hearing that has led to the "social" features which the Mission has recently added in some of its more strategic centres, such as Grenelle and the *Maison Verte* in Paris; at Lille, Roubaix, Rouen, Nantes,

Limoges and elsewhere in the provinces. The success of this "outward reach" has been particularly marked in connection with temperance leagues.

Temperance Leagues

"Temperance work gains us men," says M. Monod, of St. Quentin. "There are six hundred members in our temperance society," writes M. Canet, of Limoges, who has also been appointed lecturer on moral questions in the schools of the city. A "Temperance Night" at the "People's Hall" at Lille brings out an audience of a thousand.

Monsieur Sainton Preaching from His Auto

Conférences Contradictoires

Open debates on burning moral or political questions between some distinguished government *functionaire* and a skilled opponent from the Mission's staff serve equally to bring the work of the Mission to public notice—to attract otherwise indifferent men to the hall where the Gospel is preached.

With the Children: *Ecoles de Garde*

Sunday and Thursday afternoons the children come to the halls and boats for instruction in the Bible. To conserve the impressions thus made, and so easily dissipated by the deplorable influences among which they live, *Ecoles de Garde* (schools of oversight) have recently been established by the Mission.

At the Montmartre, Bercy and Grenelle halls in Paris, for example, may be seen five afternoons in the week, under watchful, loving care, from a hundred to four hundred children getting their lessons for the next day and romping in the commodious courts—safe from the temptations of the streets when school is out and until fathers and mothers alike have returned from work.

The Mission's Converts

These unite, so far as they can be persuaded to do so, with the church nearest to them.

At the last annual meeting of the National Association of Baptist Churches in Pastor Saillens' church in Paris, at the popular evening meeting, M. Saillens called for a show of hands of those present who had been converted in the McAll Mission,

Lace-Makers

and half the audience stood up. The Free Reformed churches of St. Etienne and Rochefort-sur-mer owe three-fourths of their members to the McAll stations in their respective cities. At Rouen, last year, after eighteen months' instruction, twelve families were recommended by M. Vautrin to the Reformed Church and received into its membership.

Where the prejudice against the "Church" runs so deep that it cannot be eradicated, the converts are formed into "fraternal societies," receiving special instruction through personal conferences, Bible classes and prayer meetings—the Mission waiting patiently the while until, perhaps, in a second generation, when the New Testament shall be better understood, confidence in the "Church" shall once again come to be in France.

The Mission and the Churches

Without the co-operation of the Protestant churches the success of the Mission would scarcely have been possible.

From the beginning the French pastors have given their help generously as speakers in the halls and as members of committees. The membership of these churches have also gladly and graciously lent their aid. Of financial help the French churches can give but little. In flesh and blood, however, they have contributed five-sixths of the Mission's staff. At the *Maison Verte, e. g.,* twenty of the Sunday and Thursday Bible school teachers are young women from the Reformed Church of St. Esprit.

The Budget

As just said, but one-sixth of the Mission's staff—about five hundred in all—are remunerated workers. The actual running cost is accordingly quite out of proportion to the size of the work, varying from $50,000 to $60,000. Of this amount one-half is contributed from the United States, one-third from Great Britain and the rest mostly from Canada, Switzerland and France.

Members of the Paris McAll Board in President Bach's Garden
From left to right (seated): Messieurs Merlin, Beigbeder, Bach, Rouilly, Benham, de Grenier-Latour; (standing): Messieurs d'Aubigné and Greig

Direction

The Committee of Directors—fifteen in number—is composed of clergy and laymen of five different denominations and of as many nationalities.

M. Louis Sautter, the honorary President, is a retired Paris banker; President Bach is a Lutheran pastor in Paris; M. Beigbeder, the Director, is an engineer in the French Army; the Associate Director, M. de Grenier-Latour, is the descendant of men who gave their lives for their faith after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; Rev. H. Merle d'Aubigné, the American Correspondent, is the son of the historian of the Reformation; the Second Vice President is the pastor of the American Church, Rev. Chauncey W. Goodrich. Bishop Ormsby, of the Church of England, was added to the committee recently.

The American McAll Association

The American McAll Association was organized in 1883 "to aid the evangelistic mission in France, known as the McAll Mission, in the promotion of a pure Christianity in France." Sixty societies are included in the Association.

Mrs. Charles H. Parkhurst, of New York, is the President. There are twenty-two Vice Presidents, representing fifteen States. Mrs.

Abraham R. Perkins, of Germantown, is the Treasurer; the Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. H. L. Wayland, of Philadelphia; the Recording Secretary, Mrs. John H. Scribner, of Philadelphia; the General Secretary, Miss Harriet Harvey, 1710 Chestnut Street (Bureau), Philadelphia. Twelve members constitute the Board of Directors.

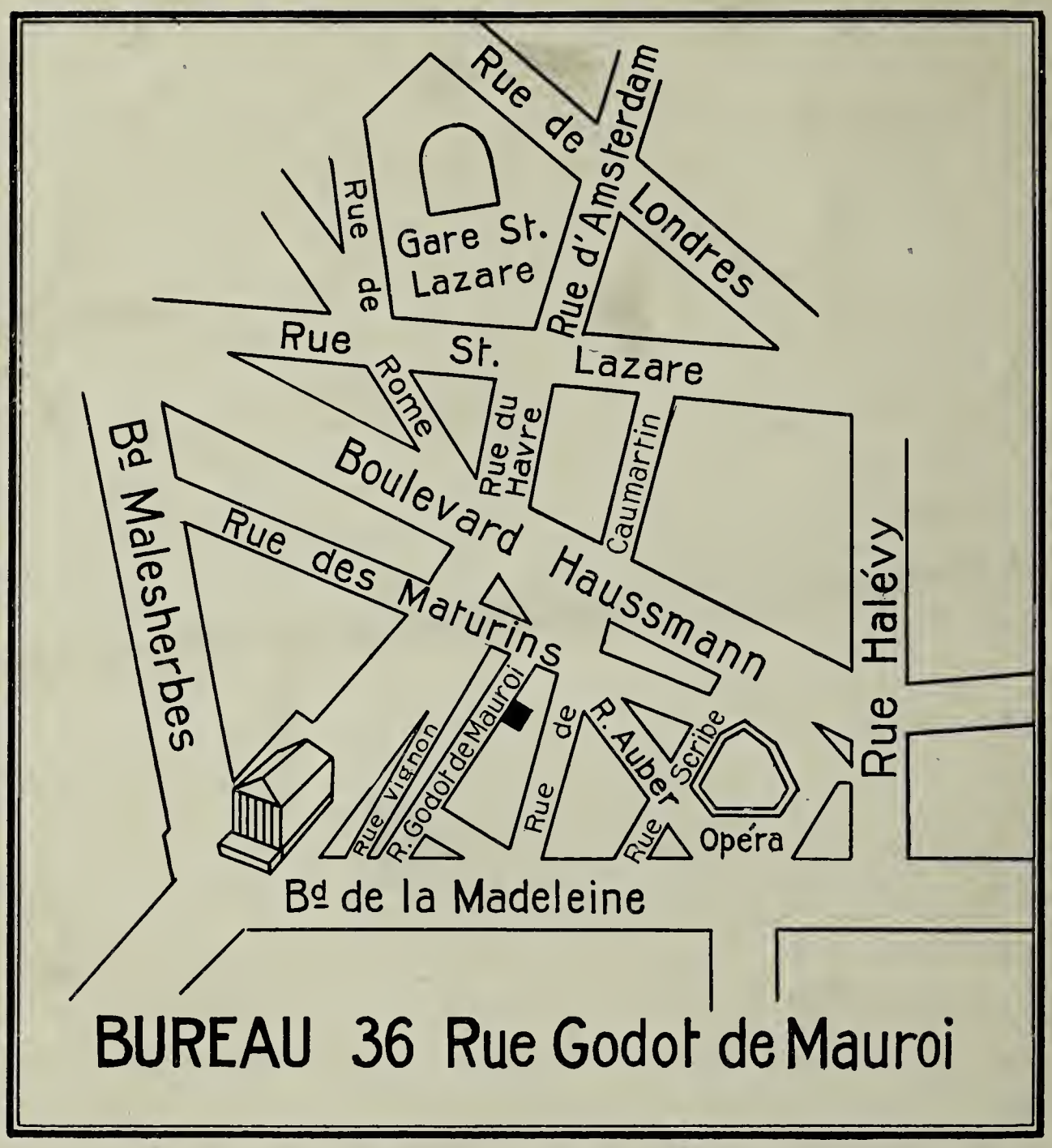
The Mission and the New France

The successful passing of the Separation Law revealed the strength of democratic sentiment in France. That revelation has been received as the signal for a forward movement on the part of every progressive force in the Republic. For the preaching of the Gospel it is today the supreme hour of opportunity in more than two centuries. French Protestantism is utterly unequal to the task of evangelizing its own country.

There is but one Protestant church to every 40,000 people. In the eighty-six *Départements* of France, twenty have no Protestant church at all. Twenty-four have but one each. Thus in more than half of France there is not one church to a *Département*.

Meanwhile Catholicism has so far lost its grip that the Catholic-Bonaparte party cannot poll a million men. And the masses fall more and more under the spell of the anti-clerical leaders, who declare that "the idea of God must be banished because it is an obstacle to social progress."

If France's 39,000,000 are to be brought under the power of the Christ, that end can be reached only through outside aid. The American McAll Association invites your co-operation toward this great result of a Christian France.



Visitors to Paris, wishing to know more about the Mission, should communicate with Rev. H. Merle d'Aubigné (Corresponding Secretary for America), at 46 Boulevard des Invalides.

Publications of the American McAll Association may be had from the General Secretary, Miss Harriet Harvey, 1710 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia.

Checks should be drawn to Mrs. A. R. Perkins, Treasurer, 302 West Upsal Street, Germantown, Philadelphia.